



**DON'T MISS MAX PEMBERTON'S SERIAL!**



# CHUMS



No. 1,306

SEPTEMBER 22,

Price

Vol. XXVI

1917

ONE PENNY

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## BECAUSE OF SUDBURY

An Amazing Story

By Captain  
**FRANK H. SHAW**

### CHAPTER 1

When Sudbury came Back

**I** TELL you, we weren't half proud of the Old School and ourselves and the Head and everybody, but we were proudest of all of Sudbury. The Head read it out at roll-call—he'd just got the news. And didn't we just let the cheers rip out when he'd finished! He can read an ordinary report in a newspaper so that it sounds like the finest romance ever published, and he let himself go when he told us how Sudbury had won his V.C. Our cheers simply made the welkin ring, whatever that might mean.

Those of us who remembered Sudbury were prouder than the rest, I think. He gave me one or two pretty useful lickings when I was his fag, and so for the rest of that day I thought myself no end of a hero. I remembered he'd always been a slow-going, methodical sort of a chap, and when he licked me he did it thoroughly—just to show me that he expected certain things of me, as he said. And the day after my biggest licking he fought the butcher's apprentice, a full-grown man, and beat him, because the lout had been bullying me.

Of course, this isn't really Sudbury's story at all; it's Ellis's and mine. But I had to mention Sudbury, because he was really partly the cause of what happened.

You see, the Head invited him down to the school when he was sufficiently recovered—he got very badly cut about in winning that V.C. And Sudbury came. He didn't seem much different from what he was when I knew him; a bit taller, perhaps, and his back was straighter, and he walked with a limp, and there was a raw gash clean across his forehead where a Boche bayonet had got in some fine work. A whole crowd of us met him at the station, and the cheers were something to remember. Sudbury remembered me at once and came up and shook hands like anything. I could only stammer when he asked me questions, because I couldn't take my eyes off the bit of crimson ribbon on his tunic, and Ellis was exactly the same.

Well, Sudbury got up to the school—he was carried shoulder-high most of the way—and there the Head made a presentation to him. We'd all subscribed to it, and I know I and



### THE MYSTERIOUS AEROPLANE

Something dropped in the park. We bolted and then looked back, and there was an aeroplane standing still! (See Captain Shaw's Great School-War Story.)



Ellis felt that we'd have surrendered our pocket-money for life to make the present more worthy of the occasion.

"And now," said the Head, after he'd made the presentation—he can talk when he's in the mood for it—"now, we'll get Sudbury to tell us all about it."

He looked at Sudbury, and Sudbury flushed as red as a pickled cabbage, then he went white and clutched at the desk for support. And his voice was thin and uncertain.

"There's nothing to tell," he said. "There was a nasty strong post in the enemy's lines, and it was causing our people a lot of trouble, so it was decided that we'd go and annex it. It was intended to be just an ordinary raid sort of thing, a bombing show, but somehow it developed into something bigger; the battalion came over the top and we went forward quite a good way. And then we got it in the neck, rather—the Boche counter-attacked after a heavy artillery preparation. Our folks got the wind up a bit and retired in worse order than they should have done. So some of us tried to encourage 'em a bit; we had to hold on to what we'd got, you see, because if we lost it it meant that the enemy would be able to annoy half a division. We tried to think of the division, I suppose, instead of ourselves—and, well, there you are. It was a very messy show, and I don't really remember much about it." He sat down, wiping his brow, and the Head slapped him on the back.

"Having heard Sudbury's report," he said, "I will now read you the official story which was read out to the King when he pinned the Victoria Cross on Sudbury's breast. That report says:

"For most conspicuous bravery and coolness under fire. Lieutenant Sudbury collected stragglers and odd men and organised them for the defence of a captured enemy position. He displayed enormous resourcefulness and courage of the highest order, he exposed himself with the utmost disregard for danger, and although severely wounded on three occasions, so rallied his men and so inspired them with his own dauntless hardihood that he undoubtedly saved the entire division from annihilation. Throughout the officer has done excellent work."

"There you are," said the Head. "I don't know what you think about it, but for myself I'm going to cheer again." And he did, and we did, until we were all as hoarse as crows.

Well, afterwards Sudbury came to our study, and he told us a lot more about everything. Ellis said, pouring out a third mug of cocoa:

"Yes, it's all right, Sudbury, but—but—" Believe me or believe me not, his face was all crinkled and twisted, as if he was going to blub. I felt that way too—hot about the eyes and throat, you know, and cold feelings at the back of my neck.

"Well, what about it?" asked Sudbury. "What's wrong?"

"What chance have we fellows—Blinkers and myself—of doing anything of that kind?" blurted out Ellis. "We're only fifteen, and they won't let us go into the Army until we're eighteen, and by that time the war'll be over!"

"There are lots of things you chaps can do, even if you can't do the actual fighting," said Sudbury. "Two-thirds of the Army doesn't actually fight; not with bomb and bayonet, and that sort of thing. You fellows can volunteer to do work that'll release grown men for the front."

"They don't give V.C.'s for that sort of thing," said I. I'll never forget old Sud's face as he gripped my shoulder.

"You can take it from me," he said gravely, "that a V.C. isn't everything, Blinkers. You get your V.C. for doing something that looks like a cinema film; and there are thousands of men who deserve it for everyone who gets it. Take the Head, for instance. It was he who taught me to hang on and hang on, no matter how rotten things were. Just as he's taught hundreds of others—fellows who are out there now. I don't think there'll be any of our school shot for desertion or cowardice." He talked this way for quite a while, but though Ellis and I felt a bit happier at the end of it all, we were still un-

satisfied. "We wanted to do something to help England."

Sudbury had to leave us after a bit, because he was dining with the Head, and he tipped us a Bradbury apiece as he was going. No end decent of him. He also shook hands very heartily, and gave us some pretty sound advice.

"I'm going to keep this quid for ever; it's the gift of a man," said Ellis.

"I'm not," said I. "I'm going to buy a revolver with mine—you can get quite a good one for a quid."

And I did get one—a beauty. I'd better not say how, because in a way it was all illegal; we were under age, and we hadn't enough money to get a licence. Ellis liked my revolver so much that he changed his mind and bought one himself. And Uncle George came to the school and tipped us another Bradbury between us, so we got some cartridges too, and we were as proud as Punch. We practised in an old quarry and became fairly decent shots. Of course we had to be careful.

After the holidays we felt depressed; ordinary swotting didn't seem to be helping much. Ellis said it was like fiddling whilst Rome was burning—he was rather given to quotations—and that a new law ought to be passed by which men of fifteen were eligible for service at the front.

I think the Head must have known how we felt, because he told us that as we had behaved fairly well, he had made arrangements for us to do some spare-time work at a place called Fairleigh, which was about three miles away from the school. He had written to our people and got their permission, and he put us on our honour to go straight to the factory—it was a very special factory—and straight back after we'd finished our day's work, which was really very decent of him. We were allowed to skip prep., and games too; somehow it didn't seem right to us to play footer in a time of grave emergency. At this munitions place they gave you lots of cake and jam. I mustn't tell you the kind of work we got to do, because it was awfully secret, but it helped us to think we were amongst those Sudbury'd talked about—the people whose work counts.

We were always fearfully particular about carrying our revolvers now. We hid them in a place we found before we went into the factory, and we carried them all the way back to school, and then stowed them away.

## CHAPTER 2

### Work for Britain

It began to be a bit uncanny as the year went on and the nights became very dark. You see, our school was in a very deserted part of the country, and even Fairleigh, where the small munitions factory had been set up, wasn't a big place. There were one or two big houses scattered about here and there, but most of them were closed up on account of the war.

Between the school and Fairleigh there was a bigish kind of hill. There were two ways of getting from one place to the other: one was by a road that passed quite close to the gates of Orville House, as they called it, and so on round the foot of the hill, and another—this was only a very rough path and practically never used—right over the crest of the hill. Orville House stood in a big, dreary-looking park, surrounded by trees. Its owner and his son had both been killed in the war, all the men-servants had enlisted, and the widow had taken her daughters abroad with her—to America, I think, because she was an American. So the big gates were close locked, and there was only a caretaker on the premises—we used to see him sometimes. He was a nasty, surly brute.

On the outward journey we always used to go past the gates of the house and round the foot of the hill, but coming back we always used the hill-path, because we used to like to stand right at the top and pretend we could see the flashes of the Flanders guns in the sky. Well, one day, as we were making a pretty useful sprint to Fairleigh, because we were a bit late, we noticed the marks of

wheels leading to the big locked gateway. We were both scouts, and we stopped, because a good scout always stops at every unusual sight.

"Only a farm cart," said Ellis. "Expect it's just been backed here out of the way of a car." But I had been looking around, and so I said:

"It went through the gates, and it hasn't come back. It was loaded heavily too. There was a piece of tyre missing on the right wheel, and the horse needed shoeing." Ellis agreed to that, and so we inspected the gate itself, but that didn't look any different. The big padlock that fastened the chain was as rusty as ever.

"I don't like the look of things, Blinkers. Why should a cart have gone in there?"

"Probably to deliver some stuff," I said.

"We ought to make sure. That's a lonely house, and—well, it's war time, and we don't know what's happening." I felt a bit that way myself, but I thought we should be serving England better by making munitions than by prowling about an empty house, so we went on.

It was when we were coming back by the hill-path that we saw the next wonderful thing. We had stopped as usual to look for the flashes of the Flanders guns, when all of a sudden I saw a bright flash. I didn't take much notice of it the first time, because Ellis and I had been having an argument about how to serve England best. We'd both clean forgotten about Orville House long before.

And then the flash came again. Ellis noticed it this time.

"That must be one of our big guns in Flanders," he said. I tell you, it was pretty thrilling; almost like watching a real battle. I seemed to see the gun being fired, and watched the shell sailing away into Boche-land until it landed plunk in the middle of a crowd of baby-killers and blew them to bits.

Then the flash came again, and we saw it wasn't a gun at all. We watched it ever so closely, and we saw it show at least half a dozen times. And the funny part of it was that flashes seemed to be running in order. First there was a long one, then two short ones, and then another long one. Although it was such a dark night there were no clouds.

"That's someone signalling," said Ellis. I felt my heart begin to beat a bit quicker.

"It comes from somewhere about Orville House," I said. It was quite true, it did.

"I'm going to inquire into this," said Ellis. I said I thought we'd better go back to school, and tell the Head what we'd seen, and let him decide what was best to be done. I don't pretend to be a hero."

"Remember Sudbury," said Ellis. "If he'd gone back to ask questions the whole division would have been lost. He acted on his own, and won a V.C."

Well, of course, I couldn't let him go alone, so off we started down the hill together. One thing we did before we started: we loaded both our pistols.

We climbed over the high wall, very, very quietly, and dropped into the park.

Ellis said: "Well, I'm blowed!" Not loudly, but sort of under his breath. I'm not surprised at it, because I felt like saying ever such a lot of bad things. You see, just as we dropped over the wall, going very gently in case of anything, there was quite a glow seemed to spread right over the park, just over the grass. It was like very bright moonlight. But it was absolutely creepy and weird; I felt my hair standing up under my cap, and the back of my neck went cold and shivery. And whilst we were trying not to let each other know what a beastly funk we were in, lo and behold! something else happened. There was a soft whirring sound in the air, as if a big bird was falling, but not a big, throbbing noise, and then—something dropped in the park and began to run right towards where we were crouched in our lair.

I halted, because it was like something out of "Dracula," or one of those books, and Ellis bolted too. But he butted into the wall, and that brought us back to our senses. We looked back at the park and the glow was still showing. And there, almost in the middle of it, was an aeroplane standing still!



I laughed then; it all seemed so simple. But Ellis didn't laugh.

"It's one of our own people," I said. "That's what the flashes were for. But he didn't make much noise."

"One of our own people wouldn't need to land here," said Ellis, and as he spoke the glow died away and left the world in darkness.

"Come on," said Ellis, and stole forward. I tell you, it was terribly exciting. I felt in my pocket to make sure my pistol was ready, and we crept out into the open, going noiselessly, as good scouts should. And as our eyes grew accustomed to the darkness we made out that someone had descended from the aeroplane and was walking across the grass. So we followed him, still crouching low, and soon we saw a door open with a little bit of a light behind it, and there in the glow was the caretaker. It was funny his ugly mastiffs weren't with him and that they didn't bark. But they didn't. We heard some conversation pass in a low tone, then a biggish man, with a round cap on his head and a very heavy coat, showed for a moment in the glare and disappeared. Then the door was shut and we were left outside in the cold.

"What shall we do now?" I asked Ellis.

"Let me think," he said, and I nearly heard his intellect working. He is a very heavy thinker at times. Presently he said: "They weren't talking in English. It was German." That thrilled me, so I said: "Well, we'll be late for lock-up if we don't clear out." I felt I wanted to be back in school. Ellis afterwards told me he was trying hard to think what Sudbury would have done.

"Blow lock-up!" he said.

I told him the Head would be frightfully wroth and that we'd probably not be allowed to make munitions and help to save the Motherland.

"You ass!" he said; "can't you see we might be able to help the Motherland more this way than by making tons of munitions? I'm going to have a look at the aeroplane." So we crept across the park, and I found the 'plane first—it hurt my shin awfully. Ellis had a pocket torch which he was very proud of, and now he turned it on and we looked. It wasn't a big aeroplane, but it was beautifully made. But my heart was in my mouth all the time, because we'd quite forgotten there might be someone else in it, but there wasn't, as it turned out, which was just as well for us, don't you think?

Ellis climbed up into the pilot's seat and flashed his lamp here and there. Then he whistled, and I climbed up because I thought he wanted assistance.

"It's a German," he said, pointing to some engraving on an instrument in the fuselage. "And that man is a spy," I tell you.

We stared at one another like anything. I said we ought to go and tell the police or something, but Ellis told me I was a fool, because by the time we found the police and got them to the spot the 'plane would have had time to get back to Germany.

"Anyway, we'll choke his luff," said Ellis, who reads sea books mostly. "It's a good thing my pater lets me tinker about with his car." And he began to be quite busy, making me hold the light. He was very keen always, and he carried one of those things that you can make into a screwdriver or a gimlet or curling tongs always. I rather went in for spanners, but between us we managed to take the carburettor and the ignition off the 'plane.

"If he starts now he'll be the cleverest German in all the world," said Ellis.

## CHAPTER 3

### Spies—and Others

We didn't quite know what next to do. We thought we ought to know what was happening in the mysterious house, so we went very cautiously towards it, and after we'd waited about a bit outside, the door opened again and the man with the leather cap came out. The old caretaker followed him and closed the door. It was awfully thrilling, because we didn't know what next they intended to do.

They didn't go towards the 'plane; instead, they walked along a path, keeping

to the grass verge, as though not wishing to make a sound. We followed them cautiously; but all the time I was wishing we were safely back at school, until I thought of Sudbury and his V.C., and somehow, after that, I simply had to follow on. Ellis said afterwards that he felt just the same.

We followed the two men for a long distance, through a side gate that opened quite smoothly—they didn't lock it as they went through. This gate gave on a narrow road that we'd noticed before.

Then they turned in at another small gate. It led into a garden, not so big as the one at Orviller House, and we could dimly see the house beyond against the night sky. They stopped inside and talked softly—we could hear them, but we couldn't understand a word they said, and I never wished so much before that I'd learnt German, though it's a beastly language. Then they moved on again. We followed, wondering what would happen. They didn't make for the house itself, but for a biggish outbuilding. We tried to see what they were doing, but we couldn't very well. Then a pocket torch flashed, and we did see. They had put two fairly biggish boxes against the outhouse, and they were fitting in something that looked like a telephone cord.

It flashed across my mind what was up. They were going to blow the place up. I didn't know what was inside, but something important must have been there. I whispered to Ellis what I thought, and he whispered back that he believed I was right. Then the man in the leather cap moved away. The other man stayed behind.

Ellis said we must separate, too, and so I followed the airman. I felt a bit weak at the knees, but I drew my revolver and followed. It was a pity my hand shook so much.

The airman went very cautiously round to the front of the house, and I saw that a room on the ground floor was occupied, because, although the curtains were closely drawn, a thin pencil of light crept through a tiny hole in one of them. The airman went close to the window and listened for a while. Then he slipped round the corner of the house to where a side door was. I followed. A moment afterwards he flashed a light on the door, and then I heard a faint scratching sound, and—he was cutting out one of the glass panels with a diamond. I saw it quite plainly.

I don't know what made me do it, but I suddenly sprang forward with my revolver levelled, and I shouted: "Hands up!" I didn't seem to feel weak at the knees any longer. It was funny, but Sudbury told us that when the moment for action arrived he never felt weak.

The airman turned with a funny guttural noise, and turned the light of his torch on me.

"Put those hands up!" I said, "or I'll shoot."

He put them up—it was rather queer, because the torch was still in his hand. And then—I hardly know how to write it, everything happened so quickly. But somehow the light twisted and pointed to his other hand, and I saw it held something that looked like a bomb. Just a small one—like our infantrymen use. And I knew he was going to throw it at me. But I was mistaken there, as it turned out. He suddenly turned round, and as he did so I shot him.

I felt all weak and cold afterwards, I hardly knew I'd done it. But I had. My finger pressed the trigger, the pistol jumped like anything in my hand; I was nearly blinded by the flash, but my bullet went home. I heard a deep horrible groan, and he spun round like a top, and as he spun something went whirling past my head. Then there was a terrific crash behind me, I felt as if I was being lifted clean off my feet, something seemed to knock me down with a savage blow, but I didn't lose consciousness. I crept forward, holding my pistol ready, recocked, because I knew now that murder was afoot. But just as I was trying to find the groaning man the lights went on in the house, and the door at the side was thrown open. A big man stood there, with a shotgun in his hands, and he covered me and ordered me to throw up my hands. So I did, and for a second it was very still, until the airman groaned again.

"What is it?" asked the big man.

"It's a German airman, and I've shot him," I said.

The big man said: "God bless my soul!"

And suddenly the wounded man shouted. There was a momentary pause, and then a shot rang out, and I heard Ellis calling loudly.

"This requires looking into," said the big man, and he ran in the direction of the shot. Someone went racing past. The big man told him to halt, but he took no notice, and the shotgun banged. It all happened ever so swiftly, I can tell you. And in another minute or so the garden seemed to be full of people. I couldn't count them. I was kneeling on the back of the caretaker of Orviller House, holding his arms down on the ground, and he was trying to get free to throw a bomb at the house. I don't know how I got there at all—I was there, that was enough for me. He couldn't struggle very much because both his legs had been broken by the charge from the shotgun.

That's really the whole of the story, but I think a few explanations are required. We were taken into the house presently and we learnt quite a lot. They carried in the wounded caretaker and the airman first—the latter wasn't dead, but my bullet had just missed going right into his brain. I'd fired at his legs, but the pistol threw high, and I'd forgotten that in the excitement of the moment. The shot had grazed his temple and stunned him.

The big man looked at us both as we were dragged inside the house. His face seemed familiar to me somehow—it seemed a very well-known face. Then I remembered that I had seen a photograph of him in a paper. It was Sir Frederic Ponsonby, the inventor.

"I don't know whether you two youngsters know it," he said, "but it looks as though between you you'd saved England."

He went and looked at the two wounded men, and nodded. "These are both German agents," he said. "I don't know how you discovered them, but you seem to have scotched them very neatly."

And then we told him everything that had happened. And that meant that he had to accompany us to the outhouse, because Ellis said that as soon as the airman shouted the caretaker had tried to set light to the thing that looked like a telephone wire, and that he had fired at him point-blank, but he had missed. Still, he had scared him pretty badly. And outside the outhouse, piled up against it, we had found two cases of most deadly explosive.

"Inside that place is my first model," said Sir Frederic gravely.

Inside he told us a good deal, but I mustn't say much about it, because the war isn't ended yet. He was a great inventor, and he had come away to a quiet country house to complete his great invention. He had done his utmost to keep everything secret, but somehow the secret had leaked out evidently. And if we hadn't seen those flashes the model would have been blown to pieces, and Sir Frederic himself would probably have been captured and taken away with his plans in that aeroplane to Germany. Because the pilot confessed, after he recovered, that that had been his intention.

Of course, we were late for call-over. But Sir Frederic motored us over to school, and took us straight to the Head.

"I suppose these boys of yours deserve a licking," he said, "but they also deserve a V.C. apiece." Ellis said:

"No, we don't sir. Sudbury did all that—by telling us about things." And I said: "Hear, hear!" Because, really, if it hadn't been for Sudbury I expect everything would have gone as the Germans planned.

I'm afraid I haven't told the story very well. Ellis says it isn't half exciting enough. But it was exciting enough when the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief in England came down to the school himself and shook hands with us both in front of everybody, and said that so long as the boys of England could behave like that England wouldn't go far wrong. And Sudbury wrote and said his V.C. seemed cheap beside what Lord French said,



## Our Most Enthralling Serial!

# The Man of Silver Mount

by MAX PEMBERTON

## CHAPTER 4

### The Cabin on the Yacht

I HAD been lying awake for nearly an hour when the cabin door opened and the strange man came in.

When I saw that he carried a revolver loosely in his right hand, you may be sure that I looked at him with interest.

First let me tell a little about the scene.

Somebody had caught me up out of the sea and had dragged me aboard this unknown ship.

I woke up in a cabin that might have been the dream of a madman. The walls of it, the ceiling, the very floors were painted fantastically with the oddest figures of demons, fauns, nymphs and nereids that painter ever imagined.

Some of these paintings seemed to me wonderfully well done. Others, and especially those hanging in frames, were atrocious, and there was one daub of a Scotsman in a kilt which would have set a crow laughing. Yet, for the rest, the place was most luxuriously furnished, and I lay in a bed that a West End hotel could not have bettered. By its side was a cabinet which should have been made a hundred and thirty years ago in France, and above that was an exquisite portrait of two of the prettiest girls I ever clapped eyes upon.

I tell you that I lay in a first-rate bed, and this is to say that all my clothes had been taken from me. There were no sheets, or, more correctly said, they had taken the sheets away to prevent my getting cold, and had just rolled me up in the blankets. Over all was a dainty bedspread worked by some clever woman's hand, and suggesting daisies and daffydowndillies on a bright green field.

This, then, was the situation in which I found myself when the strange man entered the cabin. He was not more than thirty years of age by the look of him, and wore the uniform of the American Navy. I liked his clean-shaven face, though his manner was sharp enough, and when he questioned me I made no bones about my answers.

"You're a ship's engineer?" says he. I told him that I was.

"What ship? And who was your skipper?"

"The *Dunbar*, out of Greenock," says I as bluntly. "Robert Fairley was the skipper, and Mr. Jenkins the chief officer. It was her first voyage."

"And her last, it appears. How did she founder?"

I gave him a short account of the circumstances—the fire, the boat, the death of Mr. Barnes. He listened closely, his forehead puckered.

"Well," says he, "it's a pretty story, if it's true. Where do you say the Mexicans came from? Bad lands, I suppose, and no address."

"We took them on at Tampico. They murdered my shipmate, and the day I meet them

ashore is a bad day for them. Now I've told you all I know, and it's your turn. What ship am I on, and who's the man I've got to thank for fishing me out of the sea?"

He looked at me shrewdly. Suspicion seemed a part of him, despite his open face.

"Why," he exclaimed, "that's a fair question, to be sure; but you and me have got to do some more parlez-voing before I answer it. Want your clothes, I suppose, and wouldn't mind your breakfast. What did you say your name was, by the way?"

"Harry Jessell. I came from Edinburgh."

"And then, speaking a little more broadly, I said for fun:

"Ye're no acquainted with Edinburgh, maybe?"

Now he did not like this—why, I could not imagine. His brows were knitted at my words, and quite an ugly expression came into his eyes.

"Look here," says he sharply, "playacting is no good to you, sonny. The Old Man doesn't like it. You've a hard row to hoe, anyway, and what's between your neck and a rope wouldn't make summer underwear for a Cherokee Indian. Cut out the Hamlet stunt. Honest talking is your line, and little of that. You'll want all your breath before you're through."

He turned on his heel and quitted the cabin, leaving me amazed. To what Old Man did he refer, and why should a bit of light talk offend him? I could make nothing of it. The yacht might have been owned by Pierpont Morgan by the look of it, and here was the skipper talking of ropes and hanging, just as though he were Flint, the pirate, and we were living a hundred years ago.

I began to be a little afraid. I knew not of what.

Presently, however, the biggest nigger I have ever seen entered the cabin and brought me my clothes. He appeared to be a merry fellow enough, and he asked me what I would

### Synopsis

HARRY JESSSELL, a youngster just over twenty, supernumerary on board the *Dunbar*, is telling this story. The *Dunbar* is burnt at sea, and so far as Jessell knows, the only people saved are two Mexicans named Joseph Manvilla and Rolleda, Barnes, the engineer, and he himself. For long these four are on a raft, but put up a capsize boat. The two Mexicans, villainous-looking rogues, refuse to row, and the two Britishers have to do it themselves. There is fierce trouble between the two parties over food and drink. Jessell, having kept watch, goes to sleep, leaving Barnes to attend to the boat, and when he wakes up Barnes is missing! Jessell realises instantly that the Mexicans have flung Barnes overboard, and he realises that they will do the same to him. They refuse him food and drink and compel him to row, until the youngster can do no more. Then he vows he'll capsize the boat if they dare to touch him. . . . He drops to sleep and awakes to find himself struggling in the water. They have pitched him out. . . . He struggles for a long while, but is giving up all hope when a ship comes in sight. He swoons as he seizes a life-belt thrown to him.

"have for breakfast, just as though we were on an Atlantic liner. I told him 'anything he liked'; but when I went on to ask him a question about the yacht he looked at me just as angrily as the captain had done.

"No savvy nothing, sah," he said; "you wise and keep your tongue still. Tie him up, sah, to the ceiling of your mouth. The Old Man he don't like questions. He hang 'em, sah, mighty quick. Plenty of rope at home; you keep your neck out of him."

I shrugged my shoulders and said nothing. This talk of hanging perplexed me altogether. Who was the Old Man, and why had he the right to hang anybody? The nigger observed my perplexity, and was about to speak again when a new thing happened. Through the half-open cabin door a wild cry reached me, like the howl of a beast that is hurt. I heard the sound as of a lash falling on a wooden board. Then came screams of pain and howls and curses. And, strange as it is to tell, I knew the voice of the man who was being flogged.

Joseph Manvilla, the brute who had thrown me into the sea. Should not I have been less than human if I had been sorry?

"Hallo!" cried I, "somebody is getting it hot. They're whipping him, aren't they, Sambo? Well, he deserves it, anyway. He's a pretty tough nut when he's at home, I do assure you. I shan't go into mourning for him."

The nigger seemed to like my words. He nodded pleasantly and showed his teeth.

"I tell the captain what you say, and he tell the Old Man when we go ashore," says he. "They very bad men, and to-morrow you see them at the end of a rope, sure. Now you have your breakfast, and tell yourself they have no more skin on the back. Mike O'Callaghan, he very good man with the whip. He flog all day in the prison at Costa before he come aboard here. He dam good man; make the skin fly, sah, sure and certain."

It appeared to give him much gratification, and I must say that the howls outside bore witness to his testimony. The second of the ruffians howled louder than the first, and, going to the cabin door, I caught sight of him tied up to a triangle on the fore part of the ship and writhing to the lash of a buffalo-hide whip which a huge Irishman wielded ferociously. It was merely a glance, for the nigger pulled me back with a grip of iron and slammed the cabin door in my face.

"That's agen captain's orders," says he. "Don't you do it, young gentleman, if you want to sleep in your bed this night. You do what Captain Bailey tell you, and then perhaps the Old Man forget to hang you. That very foolish to go agen captain's orders."

It was all mysterious enough, this talk about the Old Man, and the hanging and the rest of it, and I knew no more than the dead what to make of it. The nigger, on the contrary, seemed to think that I ought to understand it perfectly, and when he brought my breakfast by and by he was still at the subject, like a dog that has a bone and cannot let it go.

"Captain Bailey says he don't know what to make of you, sah; he think perhaps you an honest man, but he not quite sure. You be very proper when we come to the mountain, and perhaps the Old Man he take a fancy to you. The others he 'ang 'em sure and certain. Old Man, 'e not like de nigger, and he know 'em, sah. They as good as dead already."

"Well," said I, "if that's the case you needn't go buying me any cripe for a hat-band. I haven't any idea what you're talking about, and I don't much care. You bring some more of this bacon and kidneys along, and I will begin to understand your lingo. One thing's certain, Sambo. They don't starve you on this ship, and that's something in their favour."

He grinned all over his ebony face.

"No starvee, sah, not much. Old Man, he as rich as Croesus. Plenty to eat and drink, sah, and good wages. 'E very fine master, the Old Man, you bet."

I did not bet, but ate his breakfast instead. It was the first square meal I had had for more than two days, and good stuff it was.



They must have thought I had the appetite of a Highlander by the mountains of food they sent me—fish and eggs and bacon, and coffee in a great silver pot, and marmalade from Dundee, and all served just as though we were at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. When it was done with the nigger put a silver box of cigarettes on the table and offered me a light. He had evidently seen the captain again, and had changed his mind about my honesty.

"Perhaps you 'ang, after all," he said. "Captain says you have been playacting to him. He don't like that. 'Honest men keep their faces,' says he. You be very careful, young gentleman. You say nothing to the Old Man except what he ask you."

I promised to remember it, though who the Old Man was and what he had to do with me I could not as much as hazard. The reiteration of the name almost made me angry. There were moments when I almost felt inclined to tell him to go to Hades and take the Old Man with him. At other times I realised that this magic yacht stood for something out of the ordinary, and that I was face to face with such a mystery as I had never known in all my life.

The latter thought grew upon me as the day went on. They brought me a lunch as good as the breakfast had been about mid-day, and a dinner at eight bells, in the second dog watch; but these meals were served by a fellow I had not seen before and one I surely did not wish to see again. Taciturn he was, and brown and ugly—looked a little bit like a Cuban, and had no lingo with which I was acquainted. He made no attempt to talk to me, nor I to him, and I really began to regret the amiable Sambo and all his jabber about the Old Man and the hanging.

Where were we going, and when should we make a port? These questions recurred again and again, and were not answered until nearly midnight. I was in bed at that time, and it was Sambo who awakened me.

"Get up and dress yourself, sah," he said with some awe. "You are going to see the Old Man."

## CHAPTER 5

### The Old Man

I was heavy with sleep, but the excitement of the moment aroused me in an instant, and I put on my clothes with the feelings of a man who has an ordeal to face but does not know the nature of it.

At last I should see this mysterious Old Man and ascertain what all the talk about him meant.

The chances were, of course, that it had been all a jest, and that the nigger's babble about the hanging was a part of it. But there was an alternative, and that was not pleasant to contemplate. How if I had really tumbled into the clutches of some madman who dealt thus summarily with any unfortunate foreigner who fell into his hands? It might even be that. I reflected that we could not have touched already at any port of the African mainland. We must still be in the deep Atlantic, and the only shore we could have reached was that of one of the Westward Islands. A desolate shore it might be, too, and this Old Man a kind of king of it.

It all came to me in a flash, as you may suppose, and I had little time to think it out. The ship itself seemed to be making a difficult anchorage. The voice of Captain Bailey echoed from the deck, but in the oddest way, like the voice of a man shouting in a cavern. The footsteps of the seamen who moved above my cabin reverberated with a strange and muffled sound of which I could make but little. When the engine started, it was to give but a few turns to the propeller, which seemed almost instantly to be reversed again; while as for the groaning of the rudder chains, it was as though a man was steering a ship through the maze at Hampton Court and back again. All this said that the port was a difficult one to make. We must have taken an hour from the beginning of these manoeuvres to the moment when the anchor at last was dropped.

There was a good deal of coming and going

on the deck after this, and apparently some excitement. I should say that it must have been nearly one in the morning when the nigger re-entered the cabin and told me I was to follow him.

"Old Man waiting," he said. "Don't you forget, sah, what I have told you. You look him in de eye and say 'be dam.' He like honest gentlemen, and perhaps he like you. No savvy myself. You keep off the play-acting, and don't you forget it. Old Man, he no like 'Amlet. He hang 'em all when they try that stunt."

It certainly was not encouraging, and I should have made some remark upon it if the wonder of the new scene had not silenced me in a flash. But no sooner had I stepped out on the deck of the yacht than I found myself in the very last place in all the world I should have expected to be. The creek of a narrow river would not have surprised me; a fjord in a barren and rocky island would have been the guess I should have made had I been asked to say just where we were when the anchor was dropped. But this scene of fairyland, this vast grotto at whose rocky sides the yacht lay wharfed, this beat all imagination hollow.

Let me try and tell you about it from the beginning, for this was the gate of Silver Mount, beyond which many a strange hour awaited me.

I know now that it was a cavern beneath a mountain—a vast and mighty cavern such as you can hardly match in all the Western world. Rising to a height of some 300 feet, the walls of it shimmered as though they were of schistous rock, which great flaming arc lamps silvered with their beams. Above us was a dome vaulted like that of a basilica. The water below was a sheen as of pure gold, still and mightily deep and ominous. How the ship had made the cavern I could not immediately perceive, but I know now that it was through a natural tunnel blasted by clever engineers to shape it to their purpose, and easy of access at all tides of a windless sea.

The cavern was lighted, I have told you, by monstrous arc lamps, of which there must have been nearly twenty between the deck of the ship and a gallery cut high in the wall of the rock above. To this gallery we mounted by a zigzag of steps hewed out of the solid rock, but so undefended by any handrail or barrier that a landsman might well have lost his nerve upon them and gone over headlong.

To a sailor the climb was nothing, and to me individually an ascent to new surprises. It was wonderful to look down from the height upon the still water and the deck of the ship, and to see the figures of the crew diminishing and all the magic of the bejewelled rocks

growing in intensity as the eye could distinguish them more truly. It was a great thing to say that here was a hiding-place which all the fleets in Europe might not discover. Yet that thing being said, what of my chances in such a place? Surely the man who had come to it feared neither kings nor continents, and he must be the Old Man of whom the nigger had babbled.

"Good heavens!" said I to myself, "if this old gentleman does not like me I am as surely done for as though the rope were already about my neck and the drop unbolts."

It was a thing to freeze the blood in a man's veins and yet to bring his courage back to him. I had done the old gentleman no injury, whoever he was. I feared no questions, had nothing to conceal from him. Why, then, should he wish to harm me? None the less, there was the nigger's estimate of his humour. He might like me or he might not.

Well, it was not too late for all this, and I followed the black man up the dangerous stairway to the arched opening at the head of it. With one last look at the magic cavern I turned into a narrow passage lit by ordinary electric lamps, and after traversing it, perhaps, for fifty yards, came to a room of stone and mortar which should have been built by the Spaniards when Drake was singeing their beards. Here, to my astonishment, I found both the Mexicans sitting on common rush chairs and looking about as melancholy as any pair of ruffians that ever I clapped eyes upon. Their welcome to me was not what I expected. All their bluster had been flogged out of them, it appeared. They were as pale as they could be under their tawny skins, and it was evident that their apprehensions were of the worst.

"Hallo!" said I, "so we meet again. Well, that's no thanks to you, anyway."

They looked very sheepish at the words, to which they did not choose to make any answer. Rather they began to implore me together to do what I could for them when they met the Old Man. Evidently they knew him, and this was another page in the mystery of this ancient and to me wholly incomprehensible old gentleman. Now at last I should be enlightened.

"Look here," said I, "this talk about your Old Man has just about fed me up. Tell me who he is, and I will answer a plain question. It has been nothing but 'Old Man' ever since I went aboard the ship. Frankly, I am selling him cheap, and that you may lay two on."

They both seemed very much surprised at this.

"You don't know Julien Oranza," says Man-villa, with his eyes puckered up like those of



"Boys, they're Carranza's men. Police spies both of them!" he said



a pig. "Then you don't know Mexico. You are a stranger, Mr. Jessell."

"I'm that much a stranger that I was seventeen days in your port of Tampico, though nobody there to my knowledge sang any hymns about the old gentleman in question. Who is he, then, and what title has he to be stuck on the top of a street fountain? If he's going to hang me, for Heaven's sake let me know something about his poor old mother. I shall die curious if you don't."

It was an affectation of merriment I did not feel, nor did it move the Mexicans a jot. Manvilla, indeed, reproved me for my levity.

"Oranza was Villa's adjutant," he said gravely, "the cleverest scoundrel that ever robbed a public treasury. He got away with the stuff because of the lies he told the General about the English. He was treasurer to the army, a cruel, cunning, brutal man. They say he is of English blood, but that I do not know. If he be, you should have some influence with him, Mr. Jessell. Will you not, for pity's sake, forgive us and speak to him on our behalf?"

He actually said "behaves," but I passed that by in astonishment at what he told me, and was just about to ask him a question about himself and his business, when in comes Sambo to say that his Excellency was waiting for us and would see us immediately. So there was nothing to do but to hold my tongue and to follow the nigger. We went another twenty yards down the corridor, and then passed through a wide door covered by a great leather curtain, such as they use to keep out the draught from Continental churches. It was Arabian Nights beyond, I do assure you.

Picture a room domed like a Byzantine chapel, and the ceiling painted with the figures of saints and angels and the prophets of old. Ancient tapestries, with pictures that were crude and ugly and modern, hid the walls of bare rock. There was a long table, with a cloth of light blue silk, and upon it glass and gold and silver and such paraphernalia of a banquet as an old Roman emperor might have desired. And at the head of that table, with a broad grin upon his face, sat the dreaded Old Man.

Never shall I forget my first sight of him. A grinning baboon would have been more beautiful.

Picture a huge Highlander, perhaps of fifty years of age. Say that he had a sandy red beard almost down to his waist, a broad forehead with a tangled mass of red hair above it, prominent teeth in a firm jaw, little eyes, but restless as the eyes of a man whose brain was always working, say all this, and then put the clothes of a comic opera general upon him, and you have got my gentleman.

His uniform, to be sure, could never have been beaten in a down-town vaudeville at the Bowery. It must have come from a Mexican stores which catered alike for naval and "military" gents. The frock was that of an Admiral, blue, with monstrous epaulettes which were like palanquins upon his shoulders. His trousers were crimson with gold stripes. He had a jangle of medals and ornaments upon his breast, which he stroked from time to time, as though they were pet kittens. And he was armed to the very teeth, pistols and daggers and swords stuck all over him, just as you would push pins into a cushion. Such a man should have stood up and sung "I am a Pirate King." He seemed absolutely the part.

Well, I say that we were shown into the room by the nigger and stood at the end of the table, subject to the scrutiny of the cruel eyes. In me apparently he had little interest, but Manvilla and the other were a very feast to him. How he looked at them. How he chortled. His words were in a lingo I did not understand, but they appeared to puzzle the Mexicans. Perhaps they were not the words which had been expected. Anyway, the two men bowed to him and took their seats at the table. Then he turned to me and spoke English.

"Now," says he, becoming fierce in a twinkling, "and who the devil are you?"

"Harry Jessell, of Edinburgh," says I, and added: "A Scot, like yourself."

His eyes opened wide at that.

"And how did you know I was a Scot?"

"Would I not know one of my own countrymen? You're a Scot, and you will never be born south of Inveraray."

"Lad," says he, "sit here by my side; we'll talk of Scotland by and by. Ye're hard set, maybe, and can use your knife and fork. Fall to it, then, while I have a word with these gentlemen."

He clapped his hands in the Eastern style, and servants instantly entered and began to set the supper. They also were niggers, but they wore black breeches and had waistcoats of canary-coloured cloth, with huge white bows above. The feast that followed was worthy of the man and his home. It was a riot of rare dishes and fruits, champagne and burgundy and port, with rich coffee to follow, and cigars like drum-sticks. And all the while the Old Man was chatting away to the Mexicans as though they were his own brothers.

The latter fact surprised me. I had been led to believe that this Oranza, or whatever he called himself, was likely to be a figure of terror to the precious pair, and the turn about was not what I had looked for. At the same time, it was nothing to me, so I just went on with the eating and drinking and refused to think of anything else, until I became conscious suddenly of a strange thing happening and of a face which looked down upon us from one of the arches high above the tapestry.

A very beautiful face it was, that of a woman of thirty years of age, perhaps, fair-haired and white skin, and altogether the face of a fellow countrywoman. Just for a moment I saw it, and then it vanished as suddenly as it had come; but it left a suggestion of mystery behind. I could not but believe that the unknown woman had been made unhappy by what she saw, and that fear had sent her to spy upon us.

Well, it was only an idea, and my thoughts were diverted from it by a turn vastly more dramatic.

I have told you that the Old Man and the Mexicans were gabbling away as friendly as possible, and that I could not make out the meaning of their amicable chatter. Quite without warning this "kiss me on both cheeks" business came to an end. A frightful oath escaped the Old Man's lips. I looked at Manvilla and saw that his eyes were blazing. He also raised his voice and began to swear at his host, while as for the little fellow, he looked the very picture of a man who has seen a ghost in an entry and is too frightened to run.

Such a quarrel rising in a flash was like a tornado in an Eastern sea. The two men yelled and screeched like monkeys. I saw Manvilla catch a bottle from the table and

hurl it at the Old Man's head. It missed and broke into a thousand pieces against the stone wall of the cavern. The Old Man himself, foaming at the mouth, ceased to babble in the unknown lingo and roared for his servants.

"You there," he cried, "in with you—in with you," and instantly the room seemed half full of bandits, Mexicans and niggers and British all mixed up together and as ready for the fray as any pirates that ever sailed with Flint or English. These fellows had Manvilla and his fellow on the floor in an instant, and it dawned upon me that they were about to kill them. To say that I was sorry or afraid or desirous to help the men would be to express myself falsely. I had no feelings of the kind. The thing came so suddenly, the noise was so great, the anger of all so terrible to see that I just sat there spellbound, my pulses leaping and my heart on fire. And all the time the Old Man was roaring like a bull, his face horrible to look upon, his teeth gnashing like those of a hungry animal.

"Boys," he kept crying, "they're Carranza's men, and they think to take old John O'Shields like a rat in a trap. Police spies both, my lads. What do you say to that? Will you give 'em meat and drink? Aye, I know the kind. Meat and drink, meat and drink. At the rope's end, boys, the rope's end."

And then he said, with a savagery frightful to see:

"To Hades with them both!"

It was awful to hear him, awful to see the grovelling figures on the floor, Manvilla trying to bite and kick all who came near him, the little man crying like a child. As for the others, every spirit of evil appeared to move among them. They cursed, they spat at the prone men. Some raved like madmen, others laughed like silly women. But the eyes of all were turned suddenly upon a common object—a great hook in the ceiling above, once used to hang some mighty lamp, now turned to another purpose.

Whence the rope came I cannot tell you. It appeared as by a miracle. Dexterous hands flung it over the hook and drew it down. A second rope was swung as the first, and a noose run at the end of it. I turned my eyes, but, compelled to look at last, I saw the bodies of Manvilla and his friend hanging back to back, and understood at last the riddle of the Old Man as the nigger had revealed it.

He had hanged a couple of police spies sent from Mexico to take him. And there swung their bodies with convulsive movements above the silver and glass and the lights of his supper table.

Do you wonder if I asked myself when my turn would come?

(Another gripping instalment next week.)



Your Editor is always glad to hear from his Chums. Send a stamped, addressed envelope if you want an answer.

## The Editor Chats

yarns are about a certain company of Nibblers, and he has made a rattling series of stories out of them. Full of go, plenty of humour, and very often real incidents in them.

I'll tell you next week when "The Nibblers" will begin.

I know you fellows are working hard at making the Old Paper known, and I know you'll keep at it. Tell your chums they mustn't miss Max Pemberton's great serial—which is topping, eh?

Cheero, Chums!

### In Answer to A. Froome

As you are in your school O.T.C., and are recommended by your Commanding Officer for a commission in the Army, you will not receive a calling-up notice on reaching the age of 18 years, but will stay in the ranks of the O.T.C. until you are 18 and 6 months, when you will be posted to an Officer Cadet Battalion for your final training.

**C**APTAIN SHAW'S promised story is with you this week! The MS. of it came twenty-four hours too late last week; but better late than never!

It's a good yarn, too.

### Something New Coming!

Listen, fellows! I've got a new "stunt" on in the way of a series by your old friend D. H. Parry. "Can you think of something fresh about the war?" I said to him the other day, and he said: "Yes; how about a series called 'The Nibblers'?"

You know who the Nibblers are? You remember how our Haig is "nibbling" at the German positions in France, sending raiding parties into the enemy's trenches to get all the information they can? Well, Mr. Parry's



# THE GREY RAIDERS

An Adventure in Arizona

By JULIAN LINLEY

## CHAPTER 1

### "Lady Jezebel"

HANK SIGSBEE rode into Red Pine Camp at a gallop, pulled his horse up almost on its haunches opposite Starbottle's Saloon, dismounted, and tossed the reins over the hitching post. He seemed to be in an unusual state of excitement.

"What's wrong, Hank?" called out Dick Helmsley, who was squatting on the ground repairing a broken stirrup leather.

"Another bunch of cattle bin driven off, sonny," was the reply. "That's the third in a month, and we can't git on the trail of them blame raiders anyway we try."

"They seem to be a mysterious gang," returned Dick Helmsley. "Nobody has set eyes on them yet. They come and go like phantoms."

"I reckon they're a blame sight worse than phantoms," declared Hank Sigsbee. "Ghosts don't do any cattle-lifting, so far as I've ever heard."

"I suppose not," said Dick, laughing. "But, whatever or whoever these raiders are, surely the chaps of our outfit ought to be smart enough to lay a trap to catch them. They must be laughing at us for a set of tender-feet."

"Wal, 'taint so along ago you was a tender-foot, Dicky," Hank retorted, "though I allow you've won your spurs now. I guess here's the chance for you to rake in that five hundred dollars."

"Five hundred dollars!" echoed Dick. "Never had so much money all at once in my life. How is it to be 'raked in'?"

"It's the reward the boss has offered to pay anybody who can track down those cattle-rustlers to their lair," replied Hank. "Once they're tracked down the boys of Red Pine will know how to deal with them."

"I'll take on the job," exclaimed Dick. "Dollars or no dollars. I may make a hash of it, but I'll do my best."

"You sure will," agreed Hank. "But keep your hair on, sonny. If you take my advice you won't seriously think of starting out on that trail alone. Anyhow, you can't quit camp for days on end without the boss gives you permission. And I allow he ain't likely to do that, not on this racket, you being a young hand."

"I may be able to persuade him," replied Dick.

"Wal, you can try," returned Hank; "but I reckon you'll be wasting your breath."

And he strode across to Starbottle's Saloon to soothe his ruffled feelings with rye whisky.

Dick Helmsley had only been nine months out from England, seven of which he had spent at Red Pine Camp, in the heart of Arizona. The nearest relative he had in England was an uncle, old Josiah Helmsley, with whom he had lived since the death of his mother. But Josiah Helmsley had nothing in common with young people; in fact, he disliked their society, and to get rid of his nephew he offered him fifty pounds to start life with and make the best of it.

Dick promptly accepted, chose the Western States, as he had heard of good openings there for anyone who knew anything of horses, and finally was taken on at Red Pine Ranch, in Arizona. He was eighteen years of age, strong, active, fearless, and could ride well.

But he soon found out that the style of riding he had learnt in the old country was not the sort of horsemanship that was appreciated out West.

A man had to be a rough rider for rounding up mobs of cattle, and among his many other duties there came occasionally the unpleasant and sometimes dangerous one of taming a vicious buckjumper.

Red Pine Outfit possessed an animal of this class, a mare named "Lady Jezebel," which had the reputation of being the worst buck-jumper in all the three camps between Moose Creek and Leaping Wolf Bluff. Dick had mounted her once and had remained in the saddle exactly two minutes. He was so badly shaken up when he was thrown that he was unable to mount again. The men sympathised with him, for he was a favourite with them, but Seth Johnson, the foreman of the outfit, a bully who never missed an opportunity of "hazing" the young Britisher, laughed loudly at his discomfiture.

"You're not hurt, pretty boy," he sneered. "it's pretence. You reckoned to show off, maybe thinkin' you were gettin' on a fancy circus horse. But you precious soon found out your mistake, and you're afraid to have another try. Kind of cold feet now all of a sudden. That's what's the matter with you."

Dick took no notice of this brutal speech, but he made up his mind that if Lady Jezebel didn't break her neck in one of her fits of temper in the meantime, he would one day master her.

The incident had occurred a month ago, and every day Dick was learning something more of horsemanship, and getting wrinkles from the best riders on the ranch. It was well that he did so, for little as he could have dreamt of such a thing happening, Lady Jezebel was yet to do him a good turn.

On this particular evening, after Hank Sigsbee had vanished into the saloon of Starbottle's drinking shanty, Dick went to the bunk house to have his tea. It consisted of bacon, bread, and a concoction at which a British housewife would have shuddered. In an Arizona camp it was named "tea." Having soon finished his meal, he strolled down to the stream to wash his plate and mug, a performance which his comrades regarded with good-humoured amusement. For if they wiped round their own plates with a wisp of hay, they reckoned they were becoming almost faddists in the matter of cleanliness.

The sound of the foreman's rasping voice shouting out something caused Dick to look up. He saw Johnson coming in his direction, leading Lady Jezebel saddled up. "Say, young feller, I want you," shouted Johnson. His face was flushed, and he looked as if he had been drinking. "There's a message got to be taken along to Mr. Simmons, at Buffalo Creek, and you're to carry it."

"All right," replied Dick. "I'll go and saddle up—"

"Needn't trouble," interrupted Johnson. "You'll want your horse all day to-morrow—maybe," he chuckled thickly, "so it ain't got to be used to-night. You'll ride the Lady on this job."

"That brute!" exclaimed Dick. "There must be another spare horse in the camp."

"I don't want any talk," snarled Johnson. "This is the one that's got to be ridden. She's middlin' quiet now." This was a lie, and he knew it. "Of course, if you're still afraid of her I'll send someone else. I allow you don't amount to much as a horseman."

Any one of the older hands would have flatly refused to ride that buckjumper for twenty miles—ter-

to Buffalo Creek and ten back—merely to deliver a message. But Dick couldn't take upon himself to refuse to obey a direct order. Moreover, the foreman's half-sneering, half-bullying manner always had a rasping effect on his temper.

"What's the message?" snapped Dick.

Johnson handed him a folded sheet of paper, rather dirty, tied round with a bootlace.

"It's written," he said. "Likely there'll be a better chance of it being delivered if you walk to the Creek," he added with an exasperating laugh. "No doubt Mr. Simmons will lend you a mount to ride back. He's got some easy old corks."

Dick looked the sneering bully straight in the eyes, and it was noticeable that Johnson couldn't meet his fearless gaze.

"I'll ride Lady Jezebel," he said, "if I get my neck broken as a finish."

Then without another word he took the reins out of Johnson's hands, put his foot in the stirrup, and swung himself into the saddle.

The act seemed to take the mare by surprise, for she stood perfectly still, except that she shook her head slightly for quite half a minute. Then without any warning she made a leap forward, just one—and stopped dead.

But Dick had settled himself tightly in the saddle, and was prepared for any sudden trick on the part of her ladyship. He had watched all her manoeuvres when others had attempted to ride her.

This, however, was merely a preliminary. Her next move was to bunch all her feet together, arch her back, and bound straight up in the air. After that she let herself go for a regular buckjumping performance. Bound after bound she made straight up, with arched back and head tucked in, coming down each time on her feet with a terrible jolt.

There was no pause. Dick was shot clean out of the saddle half a score of times, coming down on the mare's neck, on her crupper, anywhere and everywhere from her head to her tail, but he was not thrown. Then she altered her tactics, swinging herself clean round, while Dick was hanging on round her neck.



Lady Jezebel let herself go for a regular buckjumping performance



By great good luck it jerked him back into the saddle. He got his feet into the stirrups and drove his spurs home.

This was too much for Lady Jezebel, but apparently Johnson didn't seem to think it was enough, for he made a step forward and cut at the mare with his heavy whip.

It was an unlucky act for him, for it brought him up close to Lady Jezebel, who lashed out with an especially vicious kick at that moment. Her hoofs thudded into the foreman's ribs and sent him clean on to his back. With a fearful cry he tried to get on to his feet again, but he was too much hurt. He stumbled and pitched sideways into the stream.

Dick saw it, but had no breath even to laugh, for Lady Jezebel had got the bit between her teeth and was flying along at racing pace. He made no attempt to pull her up, for he knew he would only be wasting his strength, but he endeavoured to turn her in the direction of Buffalo Creek. It was useless. He could no more move her head than if it had been made of cast iron. Straight on the mare galloped across country, almost at right angles to the Creek trail. There was nothing to do but "sit tight" and trust to luck.

"Go your own way, you beauty," he muttered, "and tire yourself out. So long as you don't start your buckjumping again I don't so much mind."

It was late evening now, and the sun was dipping behind the hills in the west. Dick knew little enough of that part of the country which they were heading for. It was mostly avoided by the cowboys, as it was barren and no use for cattle, there being no pasturage. Nothing ahead but a scarred plain, with black patches of rock here and there.

When darkness fell it would add considerably to the dangers of that wild ride.

## CHAPTER 2

### A Startling Discovery

THE mare took every obstacle in her headlong course, and, fortunately, she could jump like a deer, so she did not bring herself and her rider to grief. Mile after mile she covered, and Dick judged she must have done ten at least before she eased her pace down in the slightest degree. Lady Jezebel was, without doubt, a splendid animal, and had it not been for her vile temper and buckjumping tricks, she would have been worth a small fortune as a steeplechaser.

But if Lady Jezebel wanted to ease down Dick was as determined to keep her going.

"It's you and I for it now, my lady," he exclaimed, "and I'll see if I can tame you. You'll gallop on, Jezebel, until you or I or both of us haven't any breath left to go on with."

So for another hour Dick kept her at it, though she would willingly now have come to a stop. There was no moon, but there was a clear sky and the stars shone brightly.

It was a horrible tract of country they were passing through—bare, treeless, and stony, with a considerable number of stumpy grey bushes with long, spiky thorns. To the left there was a wall of rock, which must have been between eighty and a hundred feet high. It was of remarkable appearance, inasmuch as that, in the distance, it looked as though it were man's handiwork: a great wall built for purposes of defence in long-past ages—the wall of a dead and forgotten city.

Dick was able now to look about him, and he stared hard at this amazing freak of Nature.

"My hat!" he muttered. "I told Hank only a few hours ago that those cattle-rustlers came and went like phantoms, and behind that wall there might well be a mystic city where they live."

He laughed, albeit a trifle nervously, for it was an eerie place in which to be alone at night—enough to shake the strongest nerves. Lady Jezebel pulled up short and Dick straightened himself in the saddle.

"You mustn't get nervous too, my lady," he exclaimed. "We're both becoming fanciful—"

He paused abruptly, for close against the wall of rock he thought he saw something moving. It was a surprise because, until that

moment, he had imagined that he and the mare were the only living things within sight or sound.

"Anything that moves in this stricken place," he continued, talking aloud for the sake of hearing the sound of his own voice, "is worth investigating; come along, Jezzy."

At the touch of the spur the animal moved off, though slowly and reluctantly. There was evidently something very queer in the wind.

A slow canter of nearly a mile brought them close up to the rock wall. Dick shot a couple of keen glances to right and left, then drew in his breath with a gasp, for a bare half mile away he saw a string of horsemen—he hadn't time to count them. They were grey and shadowy—unreal.

Presumably they had neither seen nor heard him, for none of them gave a single look in his direction. Then—surprise upon surprise—one by one they vanished!

"Confound it!" muttered Dick, rubbing his eyes; "what's the matter with me. Am I dreaming, or— No, by George, I'm not! I believe I'm in luck and that I've solved the mystery of the 'Grey Raiders.'" He rode on again, making for the point where the horsemen had disappeared. One part of the mystery was at least explained then, for a shoulder of the rock wall, projecting at a slight angle, hid a fairly wide opening which appeared to be the entrance to a cave.

Dismounting, and throwing the reins over Lady Jezebel's head—he knew she wouldn't stray now—he entered the opening. Sure enough there was a cavern beyond which went deep into the heart of the rock. At the far end there was a wood fire blazing, and the grey horsemen were picketing their animals.

They were Breeds—that is, of mixed white and Indian parentage, and most of that class out in Arizona were bad men—road agents, horse thieves, cattle-rustlers, and worse. The peculiarity about them was their dress, which was of a dull grey—shirt, breeches, slouch hat, and even boots being of that colour.

"Say, Pierre," one of them called out to their leader, "we got to get busy this next week and round up all the horses and cattle we can. The boys on the ranches are beginning to feel sick at being tricked so often. There's parties of them goin' to take turns at night watching. I know there's a crowd out from Red Pine to-night."

"We'll ride south," was the reply, "jest as soon as we rope in those hosses from old man Simmons at the Creek."

Dick had recognised both speakers, who were known as Pierre Leblanc and Three-fingered Jake. They occasionally visited Stár-bottle's saloon at Red Pine, but their room was preferred to their company.

"I've seen and heard enough," thought Dick. "Lady Jezebel has done me a good turn to-night by bolting in this direction, for she's brought me to the raider's hiding place."

He turned to go, but to his amazement and dismay he found his way blocked. There was no longer an opening! The arched entrance to the cavern had disappeared, and in its place there was a smooth wall of rock.

"Trapped!" he exclaimed, unconsciously speaking the word aloud. And it repeated like an echo, "Trapped!"

Indeed, it so closely resembled the echo of his spoken word that Dick would have been deceived by it had it not been for the mocking laugh which followed. That was no echo!

He knew now that while he blissfully imagined he was shadowing the Grey Raiders, unseen by them, they had him spotted all the time and led him straight into this trap, from which he saw no chance of escape.

However, on reflection, he came to the only possible conclusion that would account for the mystery. The magic disappearance of the outlaws had been explained in the simplest manner; no doubt the solution of this last puzzle would be just as simple.

The wide natural opening which formed the cave entrance had, in an instant of time, changed into a solid mass of rock. Well, that mass of rock was evidently moved by some secret and hidden mechanism, which caused it either to swing on a pivot or slide noiseless away on grooves.

"If I can find the spring that works the

mechanism," thought Dick, "getting away will be as simple as eating pie."

But the secret spring was not to be found, and he had struck off along a narrow side passage to continue his search when he felt a light touch on his shoulder, then the touch tightened to a vicelike grip. He was looking into a broad, ugly face which had a sneering grin on it.

"You think you go, eh!" he growled.

"I'm sure of it," answered Dick, for at that moment he had noticed something which gave him the clue to the position of the spring.

"Sure!" snarled the other. "So! We shall see what Pierre Leblanc will say when—"

He made a half turn to call to the leader of the Breeds, but ere he could utter a sound Dick had him by the throat in a choking grip, and although he was only a boy in years he had the strength of a man. There was a fierce struggle, but Dick did not relax his hold, and both fell to the ground. They rolled over and over, wrestling, hammering at each other with their fists, and on the part of the outlaw kicking with his spurred heels as well. But presently Dick wrested himself free and got to his feet again. His adversary was up almost as soon, but as he straightened himself Dick's clenched fist caught him a terrific blow on the point of the jaw and he went down.

Then from the other end of the cave there arose a clamour of voices—shouts of surprise and savage imprecations, for the man he had "laid out" was the redoubtable Three-fingered Jake.

Dick had made a correct guess as to the position of the secret spring, and he jumped for it like a kangaroo. With all his force he pressed on it and a great slab of rock slid away out of sight, leaving the wide opening—the cave entrance. As Dick sprinted for his horse shots were fired at him, but he was not hit, though several went unpleasantly close.

"Now, Lady Jezebel," he cried, as he swung himself into the saddle, "away you go!"

The brief rest had refreshed her and she went off like a rocket, and apparently quite docile now. The raiders gave chase, urging their animals along at their utmost speed. One was mounted on a particularly swift horse, and in less than ten minutes had lessened the distance between them to fifty yards.

The rider was Pierre Leblanc!

"I not shoot you now," the savage outlaw yelled. "But when I have you—then, for you—a death—"

"Might as well die fighting," thought Dick.

He reined up and swung round. Lady Jezebel's temper was not yet proof against this; she was annoyed, and with a wild neigh of anger, galloped straight back for the pursuing raiders. There was a terrific shock as she cannoned against Leblanc. A frightful cry and the chief of the Grey Raiders was lying dead beneath his horse.

Dick fired three shots into the crowd of pursuers. He believed this was the end of all things for him when—what was the matter with the curs? Who was shouting his name, and what was the meaning of those cheers?

A crashing volley, reeling forms, men and horses falling, a voice he recognised—

"Let her rip, boys! Hang on, Dick! We followed on your tracks! Red Pine to the rescue!"

Dick remembered no more.

"Say! That buckjumper you've tamed has fair broke up your enemies. Laid Johnson out with a sockdologer in the ribs, and went through the gang of hustlers most afore we could take a hand in the game. You've got grit, sonny!" It was Hank Sigsbee giving Dick an account of the fight as they rode side by side back to camp.

"Are all the outlaws captured?" asked Dick.

"Them as ain't dead," was Hank's grim reply. "And a bunch of the stolen cattle has been recovered, mainly through your—"

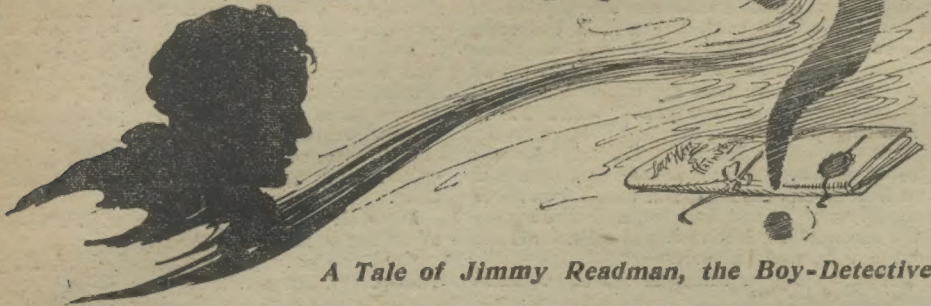
"Enough, Hank!" interrupted Dick. "If I hear any more praise of my doings I'll get a swollen head."

Our readers are informed that all the characters in each of the stories in this magazine are purely imaginary, and if the name of any living person happens to be mentioned, no personal reflection is intended.



Tell Your Friends about this Serial!

# The Lost Will



A Tale of Jimmy Readman, the Boy-Detective

By MAXWELL SCOTT

## CHAPTER 4

### The House in Wharf Lane

"SHOW a leg!" bawled Jimmy, shaking Philip by the shoulder.

Philip sat up in his bunk and sleepily surveyed his unfamiliar surroundings.

"Where am— Oh, yes, I remember now!" he exclaimed. "Is it time to get up?"

"Time to get up!" grinned Jimmy. "It's ten o'clock!"

"Never!" cried Philip, leaping out of bed.

"Fact!" said Jimmy. "Yer was sleeping so soundly I 'adn't the heart to wake yer."

"How long have you been up?" asked Philip as he started to dress.

"Bout two hours," said Jimmy. "I dunno as I should 'ave got up so soon, but I was wakened by a messenger from the Barnby post office with a wire from the guv'nor."

"Is Mr. Dale coming back to-day?" asked Philip eagerly.

"No," replied Jimmy. "He sez—but 'ere's 'is wire; read it for yerself."

He handed Philip the telegram, which ran: "Date of return uncertain. Will write or wire later.—DALE."

"I'm sorry," said Philip in a disappointed voice.

"Well, yer needn't say so!" retorted Jimmy. "It ain't very flatterin' to me, yer know! I'm glad the guv'nor isn't comin' back to-day, for it gives me a chance to show wot I can do when I'm on my own."

"Oh, I didn't mean—" began Philip.

"Don't apologise!" interrupted Jimmy. "I know you'd rather 'ave the guv'nor, but you've got to put up with me! I'm sorry I can't provide yer with a bathroom, but you'll find a bucket of water outside, and by the time you've performed yer ablooshuns I'll 'ave breakfast ready. I've been up to the farm for cream and eggs, an' I've arranged with Jackson to keep an heye on the 'orse an' caravan while we're away; so there's nothing to prevent us startin' out for Highfield as soon as we've 'ad some grub."

This programme was duly carried out, and a few minutes before noon the two boys turned into Wharf Lane and pulled up outside the door of No. 16.

No. 16 was one of a long row of dingy-looking houses, all of exactly the same pattern. Nos. 14 and 18—the houses on each side of it—were unoccupied, and displayed "To Let" cards in their windows.

"This is the house," said Philip. "Shall I ring, or will you?"

"Me!" said Jimmy. "I'm in charge of this 'ere case, so just leave everything to me."

He rang the bell, but there was no response. He rang again, and yet again, but still nobody appeared.

"Flegg must be out," he said. "I wonder if he locked the door behind 'im."

He turned the handle of the door, but could not open it.

"It's locked right enough," he said.

"Then we'll have to wait till Flegg comes back," said Philip.

Jimmy winked.

"I don't think!" he said. Likewise "not 'arf! As the poet says, such an opportunity may not occur again!"

He examined the latch-lock; and then, drawing a small bunch of skeleton keys from his pocket, he inserted one of them into the keyhole, gave it a turn, and pushed the door open.

"But—I say—that's illegal, isn't it?" gasped Philip.

"Quite illegal," said Jimmy coolly. "But we gotter do illegal things sometimes in our profession! Are yer comin' in with me, or would yer rather wait outside while I go in an' spy out the land?"

Philip hesitated for a moment.

"In for a penny, in for a pound!" he said desperately. "I'll come with you."

Jimmy leading the way, the two boys stole into the front passage, where, after closing the door, they stood for a moment listening.

"I don't 'ear anything, do you?" whispered Jimmy.

"Not a sound," answered Philip in the same low voice. "I don't believe there's a soul in the house."

"Leeming's 'ere, at any rate," said Jimmy. "Leastways, he was 'ere yesterday, wasn't he?"

"Flegg said so."

"Then he's probably 'ere now," said Jimmy. "If he's ill, as Flegg said, he's probably in one of the bedrooms; but afore we go upstairs we'd better make sure as there's nobody down 'ere."

There were two rooms opening off the front passage, one on each side. At the end of the passage was the staircase; and behind the staircase were a third room and a kitchen.

A rapid glance into each of these rooms revealed the fact that they were all deserted, though a fire was burning in the kitchen grate and the remains of a meal were on the table.

## Synopsis

JIMMY READMAN, the boy assistant of Martin Dale, the great detective, is taking a holiday, with his master, in a caravan. Dale is called away, and during this time Jimmy meets with an adventure. At night, there is a noise outside, and he rushes out to see what is happening. He hears someone calling in alarm. Some people are struggling there in the darkness. At that moment there is the whir of engines, then loud explosions—Zeppelins are about. The light of the exploding bombs shows Jimmy the struggling people—they are a man and a boy. The man gets away and the boy comes to Jimmy. He introduces himself as Philip Norwood, and tells Jimmy he wants Martin Dale. That gentleman not being there, Jimmy undertakes the case. It concerns the will—which Philip tells Jimmy is missing—of a man named Rudd. He has come in answer to an advertisement of a man named Leeming, valet to Mr. Rudd. Philip called at the address but could not get at Leeming there, and Norwood met a Major Vincent, an old enemy. The boy detective solemnly assures Philip that the man who had attacked him was either Major Vincent or another rascal named Flegg—both interested to keep Philip from getting on the trail of the lost will—and the two decide to go on the track of a clue.

"So far, so good," said Jimmy. "Now for upstairs."

They crept up the staircase and reached the first-floor landing. Four bedrooms opened off this landing, one over each of the rooms downstairs; but here again a hurried exploration sufficed to prove that all four rooms were unoccupied.

"He must be in one of the hatties," said Jimmy. "Come on."

They stole up a narrow flight of uncarpeted stairs which led to the second and topmost floor. On reaching the top of these stairs, they perceived two doors, each of which apparently led into an attic. One of these doors was open, and through it they could see that the room beyond was empty and unfurnished. The door of the second attic was closed.

"If he's anywhere in the 'ouse, he's in that room," whispered Jimmy, pointing to the second door.

He glided to the outside of the door and gently turned the handle. As he did so, and before he could open the door, a startled voice inside the room called out: "Who's there?"

Carried away by excitement, Philip let out a whoop of triumph!

"That's Leeming's voice!" he cried. "I'd know it anywhere!"

And, elbowing Jimmy aside, he flung the door wide open and strode into the room.

## CHAPTER 5

### Trapped!

LEEMING was lying on a small camp-bed beside the window. As the two boys afterwards discovered, he was paralysed in both legs as a result of the injuries he had received; and although he was otherwise hale and hearty, he was practically helpless.

At the sight of Philip he raised himself off his pillow and stretched out a welcoming hand.

"Glad to see you, Master Philip," he said. "So you saw my advertisement, did you?"

"I saw it yesterday," said Philip. "I came here last night, but Flegg wouldn't let me see you. He said you were dangerously ill, and the doctor had forbidden you to receive visitors."

"What a lie!" said Leeming indignantly. "I wonder why he said that?"

"Probably he had been bribed to say it by Major Vincent. Did he tell you that the major was also here last night?"

"Oh, yes. In fact, he brought the major up to see me."

"The major had seen the advertisement, too I suppose; and he came to ask you what you knew and what you wanted to tell me?"

"That's it."

"Did you tell him?"

"What a question to ask!" said Leeming reproachfully. "Of course I didn't tell him. First he coaxed and wheedled and offered me money, and then he blustered and stormed and threatened me, but I just told him that what I knew I'd tell to you and nobody else."

"But who's your companion?" he asked, glancing at Jimmy, who had followed Philip into the room.

Philip introduced Jimmy, related what had happened on the previous night, and described how they had gained admission into the house.

"It was a stroke of luck, finding you alone in the house, wasn't it?" he concluded.

"You'd generally find me alone in the house about this time," said Leeming. "Flegg isn't married, and the day-girl goes home at twelve, and from twelve to one Flegg usually takes his dogs for a run."

"His dogs?"

"Yes. He's the owner of a couple of mastiffs—ugly customers they are, too—and I really believe they're the only creatures in the world for whom he has any real affection."

"What is he?"

"His trade, you mean? I don't know. He must have a bit of money saved up, for he never does any work."

"How did you come to lodge with him?"

"When I was discharged from the hospital I advertised for rooms and Flegg answered my advertisement. I'm bound to confess that he has made me very comfortable, but now that I know he's in league with the major, I shall



change my lodgings as soon as possible. I knew he wasn't exactly a saint, but I never thought he'd act like he acted last night. I shall tell him what I think of him when he comes in."

"In the meantime," said Jimmy, speaking for the first time, "as Flegg may return any minute, 'adn't yer better get to work an' tell Philip wot yer want to tell 'im?"

Leeming nodded his approval.

"Shut the door," he said, "and bolt it, and then if Flegg returns before I've finished, he won't be able to disturb us."

"Is it about Mr. Rudd's missing will that you wish to speak to me?" asked Philip when Jimmy had closed and bolted the attic door.

"Yes," said Leeming.

"Was I right in thinking that Mr. Rudd had concealed it somewhere?"

"You were."

"And you know where he concealed it?"

"No, but I can tell you how you can find out where he concealed it. I should have told you before, but, as you know, I was unconscious for some time after my accident, and when I came round I found I had lost my memory. It's gradually coming back, however, but it was only the day before yesterday that I remembered what Mr. Rudd had told me about his will."

"And what did he tell you?" asked Philip eagerly.

Leeming answered the question with another.

"Do you remember a bookcase in Mr. Rudd's bedroom in which he kept a number of his favourite books?"

"Yes," said Philip. "It was a lock-up, glass-fronted bookcase, and Mr. Rudd always carried the key about with him."

"That's the one I mean. Do you also remember that on the top shelf there were six small books bound in blue leather with the Rudd crest on the back?"

"I remember them well."

"I forget the title—"

"But I don't. It was 'A History of English Arms and Armour. Pocket Edition. In six volumes.'"

"Yes, yes. That was it! I remember now! Well, you remember Ewart, who used to be butler at the Manor?"

"Of course. He died about two years ago."

"He did; and on the day that he died Mr.

Rudd called me into his study and told me he was going to trust me with a very great secret. He said he had made a will, leaving everything to you, and had concealed it in a safe hiding-place known only to himself. He said he had told Ewart how to find the will, and now that Ewart was dead he was going to tell me. Then he took me up to his bedroom, and after swearing me to secrecy, he pointed to those six small books on the top shelf. 'When I die,' he said, 'open this bookcase, and on page ninety-eight of one of those volumes you will see a word written in pencil which will tell you where my will is hidden.'"

"Was that all he told you?" asked Philip as Leeming paused.

"Yes. He said a lot about the trust he was reposing in me, and how nobody but he and I knew how to find the will, and that I was never to repeat what he had told me, and much more to the same effect; but that was all he told me about how to find the will."

"Didn't he say in which of the six volumes you were to look?"

"No. He just said 'On page ninety-eight of one of those volumes.'"

Philip turned to Jimmy.

"What's to be done now?" he asked. "Before we can find out where the will is hidden we've got to get hold of those six books, but the books are at the Manor, and the major would never allow—"

"But the books are not at the Manor," interrupted Leeming. "I haven't finished my story yet. While I was in the hospital most of the servants at the Manor came to see me at one time or another; and they told me that as soon as the major entered into possession of the place he started selling things right and left in order to raise money. Among the things he sold, they told me, was that bookcase in Mr. Rudd's bedroom. He didn't even trouble to open it, they said, but sold it just as it stood—books and all."

"Did they tell you to whom he sold it?"

"Yes. They said he had sold it, and a lot of other books, to old Peter Pratt—the man who keeps the second-hand bookshop in Change Alley."

"I know the shop," said Philip. "Mr. Rudd often used to go there, and sometimes he took me with him. So that's where the books are now, is it?"

"Unless, of course, Mr. Pratt has sold them," said Leeming. "Anyhow, if I were you, I should go to Pratt's at once and ask to see the books; and if he has sold them, I should ask him to whom he sold them, and I should then go to the man who bought them and ask him to let you see them."

"And if you'll take my advice," he added, "you'll go at once, before Flegg returns; for if he comes back and finds you here, there'll probably be trouble."

This appeared to the boys to be good advice, and accordingly, after thanking Leeming for his information and promising to let him know the result of their quest, they prepared to take their departure.

"I'll first make sure as the coast is clear," said Jimmy as he unbolted and opened the door.

He stole to the top of the attic stairs and stood for a moment listening.

"All serene!" he whispered, beckoning to Philip. "Come on!"

Philip closed the attic door and they crept down to the first-floor landing, where again they halted and listened. Not a sound came up from below.

"We're in luck!" chuckled Jimmy. "Flegg ain't returned yet, that's evident."

They descended the last flight of stairs and reached the passage which led to the front door. As already explained, there were two rooms opening off this passage, one on each side. The doors of these rooms were between the staircase and the front door; and at the same instant as the two boys reached the foot of the stairs, a man strode out of one of the rooms with two ferocious-looking mastiffs, straining at the leather thong by which he held them in leash!

"Flegg!" gasped Philip, starting back and clutching Jimmy by the arm.

## CHAPTER 8

### In Durance Ville

"MISTER FLEGG, if yer please!" said the man. "Didn't expect to see me, did yer? Don't say you're glad to meet me, 'cos I shan't believe yer if yer do!"

"An' now," he added, dropping his bantering tones, "p'raps you'll be good enough to explain wot you're doin' in my 'ouse?"

"We came to see Leeming," said Jimmy. "As yer weren't at 'ome, we took the liberty of openin' the door an' walkin' in."

"Oh, yer did, did yer?" said Flegg. "Well, d'yer know wot the lor calls chaps wot do that? It calls 'em 'ousebreakers an' it sends 'em to clink!"

"If we've done anything wrong," said Jimmy loftily, "yer can lodge a complaint with the police. We'll give yer our names an' addresses. My name's Jimmy Readman; an' this, as yer know, is Philip Norwood. We're stayin' in a caravan in a field near Barnby, so yer know where to find us if yer want us."

"Keepin' a better than findin'!" said Flegg with an ugly grin.

Jimmy ignored the remark and turned to Philip.

"Come on; we'd better be goin' now," he said; and started to walk towards the front door.

Flegg did not stir, but uttered a low, peculiar whistle. Instantly the dogs crouched in readiness for a spring, at the same time baring their fangs and growling fiercely.

"I wouldn't advise yer to try to pass these 'ere dogs," said Flegg warningly. "They can't abear the sight o' strangers; an' although I'm doin' my best to 'old 'em back, they might break away from me, yer know! If they did, you'd be torn to ribbons afore I could call 'em off."

Neither Jimmy nor Philip was a coward, but they had only to look at the dogs to realise what their fate would be if Flegg carried out his scarce-veiled threat.

"That's better," said Flegg, as the two boys halted half-way down the passage. "I'm glad to see you've sense enough to know wot's good for yer!"

"If you don't let us pass," said Philip desperately, "I—I shall shout for help!"

"An' much good that'd do yer!" said Flegg. "The 'ouses on each side of this are empty, so



Flegg pointed to the door. "In there!" he said curdly



the only person wot'd 'ear yer would be Leeming—an' Leeming's paralysed in both legs. It'd grieve me very much if you was 'urt, but nobody could blame my dogs if they worried two lads wot 'ad broke into my 'ouse while I was out."

"Look 'ere—suppose we cut the cackle an' come to business," said Jimmy. "I'll admit you've got us tied up in a knot. Well, wot are yer goin' to do abaht it?"

"I'm goin' to lock yer up while I go for a plecceman," said Flegg; "then I'm goin' to give yer in charge for breakin' into my 'ouse." Jimmy heaved a sigh of relief. He had expected something worse than this.

"Yer needn't lock us up," he said. "We'll promise to stay 'ere till yer come back with the cop."

Flegg placed the tip of his forefinger on his lower eyelid and drew it down.

"See hany green in my heye?" he asked jeeringly.

"Meanin' to say yer don't trust us," said Jimmy. "Then we'll go with yer to the police station."

Flegg shook his head.

"Not 'avin' any!" he scoffed. "As soon as we was ahtside the 'ouse, you'd take to yer 'eels an' bolt!"

"I swear we wouldn't," said Jimmy; "but even if we did, you've got our address an' you'd know where to find us."

"As I remarked afore," said Flegg, "keepin's better than findin'! Now I've got yer, I'm goin' to keep yer under lock an' key till I can 'and yer over to the police."

"Orlrite!" said Jimmy resignedly. "Where are yer goin' to lock us up?"

"I'll show yer in a minute," answered Flegg. "There's a door behind yer, at the far end of this passage. It's the door wot leads into the kitchen. Kindly oblige me by turnin' round an' walkin' slowly—slowly, mind yer—through that door. An' remember," he added grimly, "if yer run, or play any tricks, it'll startle the dogs, an' I'll not be able to 'old 'em back! Right abaht face! Slow march!"

It was a humiliating situation for the two boys, but they were powerless to resist. Slowly and dejectedly they walked down the passage and entered the kitchen, Flegg following close behind them with the dogs.

There were three doors opening out of the kitchen. One was the door by which they had just entered. The second was the back door of the house and led into the yard at the rear of the premises. The third, as they afterwards discovered, opened on to a flight of stone steps which led down to the cellars.

"Alt!" commanded Flegg. "Mark time while I light a candle."

Still holding the dogs in leash with one hand, he opened a cupboard with the other, took out a candle, struck a match and lit it.

"Now open that door," he said, addressing Jimmy and pointing to the cellar door.

Jimmy opened the door and gazed ruefully at the steps and the darkness into which they disappeared.

"You're not goin' to lock us up in the cellar, are yer?" he protested.

"That's just wot I ham goin' ter do!" said Flegg. "Dahn yer go."

Jimmy hesitated and glanced at Philip. The back door was only a few feet away and was apparently unlocked. Should they risk a rush into the yard, and a lusty shout for help?

Flegg seemed to guess what was passing through Jimmy's mind, for he swiftly stooped down and released the dogs from the leash.

"Mark 'em!" he cried sharply.

The words had scarcely crossed his lips ere one of the dogs was crouching in front of Jimmy, and the other in front of Philip, each dog bristling with excitement and only awaiting a word from its master to spring at its quarry's throat!

"You can call them off," said Philip bitterly. "You've got the upper hand of us, and we've no choice but to submit to your orders."

"Dahn yer go, then," said Flegg again.

"The dogs won't molest yer unless I tells 'em to."

Philip started to descend the steps, and after a moment's hesitation, Jimmy followed his example. Flegg waited until they had reached the bottom of the steps; then, bidding the dogs

to remain in the kitchen, he descended the steps.

There were two cellars under the house, as there were under all the other houses in the terrace. The smaller of the two, which was at the bottom of the steps, had a circular opening in its roof, covered with an iron plate.

At one end of this smaller cellar there was a heavy wooden door, studded with iron nails and provided with a couple of massive bolts. This door led into the second cellar, which was empty, and from which there was no exit except by the door just described.

Holding the candle above his head, Flegg pointed to this door, which was slightly ajar.

"In there!" he said curtly.

Jimmy pushed the door open into the cellar.

"I'm not goin' in there!" he said defiantly. "It's more like a dungeon than a cellar! If once yer got us shut up in there, yer could keep us there for ever; an' we might——"

The sentence ended in a startled shout, for at that moment Flegg sprang at him from behind and gave him a sudden vigorous push!

Taken completely off his guard, Jimmy stumbled through the open door and fell on his hands and knees on the cellar floor. Before he could pick himself up, Flegg seized Philip by the scruff of the neck and sent him reeling into the cellar. The next instant, almost before the boys had realised what was happening, he dragged the door to and bolted it!

"I'm not goin' in there!" he called out in mocking tones, imitating Jimmy's voice. "It's more like a dungeon than a cellar! If once yer got us shut up in there, yer could keep us there for ever!"

"Quite true, my little dears, quite true!" he went on. "I could keep yer 'ere till yer died of starvation, an' yer might 'oller an' shout till yer were blue in the face an' nobody would ever 'ear yer."

"But I'm not goin' to be so crocel as that," he concluded. "I'm only goin' to keep yer 'ere till I've seen Major Vincent an' told 'im abaht them six little books wot he sold to Peter Pratt!"

(Don't miss next week's fine instalment.)

## HAUNTED HOUSE!

A Yarn with an Unexpected Ending

By A. G. ROPER

### A Story Told

"PLEASE, sir, may we go to the Haunted House?" piped Smith Minor.

"Yes, sir, may we go?" welled up the supporting chorus.

"What do you want to go there for?" said Mr. Macmillan, who was in charge of the walk, and was very bored with it. He didn't mind looking after cricket, but the Head had decided the ground was too wet, and so the penance of a walk had taken the place of a game.

"Oh, sir, it's ripping?" piped Smith Minor. "We want to see the room where the tramp murdered the old miser."

"What a bloodthirsty brute you are, Smith," said Mr. Macmillan. He knew Chesterton Manor, for some reason or other, was strictly out of bounds, but after all he didn't see why the boys should not go there. Besides it would save him a long and irritating tramp through the countryside, and he could sit down and smoke in peace while the boys hunted imaginary ghosts.

"All right," he said, "only mind, not a word about it when we get back."

"Thanks awfully, sir, you are a sport," came a grateful chorus.

Chesterton Manor lay in a little hollow about a quarter of a mile from the school. Some years ago an old miser was supposed to have been murdered there by a tramp, and superstitious villagers told wonderful stories of flashing lights and a ghostly figure that hunted in vain at midnight for his stolen hoard. Whatever the truth of the tale, the Manor had got an evil repute and for years it had been left unlet, the grounds wild and unkempt, the windows broken, the rotting wainscots a happy hunting ground for rats innumerable. There was nothing the boys loved more than to explore its rotting interior for secret panels and see ghosts with the vivid imagination of youth.

There below them it lay in a little hollow, its gabled roofs peeping from the sheltering trees. It was picturesque enough in the daytime but at night a sinister desolation hung about it sufficient to affright the boldest spirit. They passed down the little winding pathway and came at last to the rusted iron gates that led into the grass-grown avenue. With a protesting groan the gates yielded and a swarm of excited boys streamed eagerly on their way to the house. Ivy, in unrestrained riot, clung about the doorway and festooned itself over the windows. The door was locked, but the difficulty was obviated in the customary way by Smith Minor crawling in through a broken window at the back and opening it. Inside there were musty odours of mildew and decay; there were the sounds of shuffling and

scurryings in the hark. It certainly contained all the traditional requisites of a haunted house.

Mr. Macmillan, with a sigh of relief, took out his pouch and his pipe and sat down on the stairs. Smith Minor conducted an awestricken crowd to the haunted chamber, and entertained them with lurid details of the crime which were chiefly the product of his imagination.

"That's where he was killed, just there. You can see the bloodstains on the floor now."

"Bloodstains," said the red-headed Rogers. "My dear chap, that's dirt and not bloodstains. Besides, last time we came you pointed 'em out in a different place."

"Shut up, you ass," said Johnston. "And don't swank. You don't know anything about it. Go on, Smith. Don't take any notice of him."

Smith continued his narrative, which had increased in luridness at every recital.

"He was sitting over there counting his money, biting it and bathing in it. Misers get so keen on money that they do that sort of thing. They say he had millions. At that moment the tramp came in."

"Aha," said Rogers. Johnston kicked him and Smith continued his horrible chronicle of crime.

"He was starving, and the sight of all that money maddened him. He thought of his wife and his starving children and he asked the miser for money. The miser refused with mocking words."

He paused and looked round to notice the effect of his recital on the audience.

"End of Reel One," said Rogers and got another kick.

"The tramp went down on his knees and begged him. The miser only jeered the more. Then the tramp saw red. He rushed at the miser, seized him by the throat and strangled the life out of him. A week passed and the people in the village began to grow anxious about the miser. Every Saturday night he used to come down into the village to buy provisions. On the second Saturday, when he didn't appear, they thought that something must have happened to him. That night they went to the Manor. They found the miser stretched upon the floor with the life-blood oozing from him!"

"It had been oozing a long time," said Rogers. "What a nasty mess it must have made."

"It's all very well for you to sneer, Rogers," said Smith Minor indignantly. "But I bet you what you like that you wouldn't come within a mile of the Manor at night."

"I bet you I would," said Rogers. "What'll you bet me, Smith?"



"I'll bet you my new cricket bat."  
 "Right-o," said Rogers. "That's just what I want. I bust mine in the Ringsfield watch."  
 "Yes, but how are you going to do it?"  
 "Easy enough. I can get out of the dormitory on to the window of the changing room, after the Head's been round, and there you are. It's simple enough. I've done it heaps of times."

"I bet you don't, Rogers. You'd get a most frightful licking if you were copped, and you'd probably get expelled as well."

"I'll risk that, and I don't intend to be caught. I'll do it to-night."

"Yes, but how am I going to know you've been here?"

"Can't you believe a chap?"

"I don't know, Rogers. You told an awful whopper in class yesterday about that piece of paper you hit Johnston on the ear with."

"Oh, that's different," said Rogers easily. "That was a white lie."

"Well, if you can tell white lies, you can tell black 'uns," said Smith Minor, who, it was clear, had no faith in the red-headed one's veracity.

"I've got it," he said suddenly. "There's that disappearing egg trick I've got. I'll leave the bottom part here and I'll keep the top part, and when you go you can bring it back, and if it fits, then I'll know you've been and you can have the bat."

From below rose the stentorian tones of Mr. Macmillan, who had finished his pipe. Smith Minor carefully deposited the bottom of the disappearing egg trick on the table.

"I bet you don't," said Johnston.

"I bet you I do," said Rogers.

### Something Heard—

The red-headed one was always doing things like that. He held the record for lickings and he was always in trouble of some sort or other. The Head regarded him as incorrigible, the masters regarded him as a dare-devil and secretly admired him: to the boys he was known as "Roger-the Reckless." So behold the reckless Roger that night slowly opening the window, with many pauses to listen, after the Head had gone his rounds, bidding the excited dormitory a merry farewell, and dropping on to the roof of the changing room below. From the changing room he dropped on to the ground, and, picking himself up, scaled the playground walls and set off across the fields. It was a lovely starlight night and everything stood outlined clear before him.

He reached the valley. Below him was the Manor, looking a little eerie in the moonlight. Just for a moment Rogers felt his heart beating a little quicker than usual, and then, putting his hands in his pockets and whistling discordantly, he set off on his mission. Everything was very still. Now and then an owl hooted eerily and from far away came the distant rumble of a train. Rogers pushed open the creaking gates and strutted up the avenue. Outside the broken window he paused to get his electric torch into action. Then, summoning up all his courage, he clambered into the darkness within. Each sound was magnified a thousand times in the empty corridors. For a moment he stood still, afraid to move, then, on tiptoe, he advanced to the stairs, rushed up them two at a time, and reached the haunted chamber. Hurriedly he flung open the door, his torch busy the while.

What was that? His heart beat a rapid tattoo: he felt a sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach, the sort of feeling one got in the waiting room at the dentist's. It was all right: it was only his shadow. What a fool he was! He was glad Smith Minor was not there to see him. There on the table lay the disappearing egg trick. He picked it up and put it in his pocket. His mission was achieved: the bat was his. He felt somehow a little disappointed. It was all so beastly unexciting. Of course he could invent things, but that wasn't exactly the same. He went downstairs again, his mind busy framing a tale. He came to the broken window and then he paused. Outside he heard voices. Peering above the sill, he saw two men standing outside, a short, fat man with a cigar in his mouth, and a tall, thin man with a cigarette.

"Just the place for a murder," said the fat man.

"Couldn't be better," said the thin man. "And it's nice and lonesome too. We shan't have a crowd of people messing round."

Terrified, Rogers listened. This was more than he had bargained for. Supposing they caught him, what would they do then? Almost he made up his mind to bolt for it by another window, but curiosity chained him to the spot.

"You hide inside there by the broken window," continued the fat man. "Travers lures the old gentleman here and asks him for money. He refuses, you fire, and there you are. How's that?"

"Fine," said the thin man enthusiastically. "Couldn't have a better place. To-morrow morning at ten, then?"

"That's the idea," said the fat man.

"Let's have a look round inside," said the thin man.

Rogers prepared to make a bolt for it.

"Too beastly dirty," said the fat man. Their voices died away down the avenue. The gates clanged behind them.

"The brutes," said Rogers. He waited for five minutes and then clambered out. All the way back his mind was busy with the predicament in which he found himself. The murder must be prevented at all costs. Unfortunately, so far as he could see, it meant telling the Head, and that was certain trouble. On the other hand, if he saved the old gentleman's life, the Head was bound to take that into consideration. Balancing one thing against another, he came to the conclusion that the worst that could happen to him would be a severe wiggling. In any case, even if it meant expulsion, it was his duty to tell what he had heard, and it was all so fearfully exciting that he could have kept it to himself if he had wanted to.

He got back without any further adventure. Clambering in through the window amid suppressed excitement, he flung the disappearing egg on Smith Minor's bed.

"See any ghosts?" whispered Smith Minor.

"Not ghosts," said Rogers, hurriedly disrobing. "Something far more exciting."

"What was it?"

A dozen boys sat up in bed and listened eagerly for the answer.

"I'll tell you about it to-morrow. I'm too tired now. Well, good-night everybody."

He clambered into bed. His dreams that night were as lurid as any penny dreadful he had ever read.

### —And Something Seen!

"Well, well," said the Head, peering at Rogers over his spectacles. "This is the most amazing story. And do you mean to say that you got out of your dormitory at night and broke bounds?"

"Yes, sir," said Rogers.

"Um," said the Head. "Well, that can wait. We'll deal with that presently. In the meantime what are we going to do about this peculiar story of yours, eh?"

"I don't know, sir," said Rogers.

"You are certain you didn't make it up?"

"Quite, sir. I shouldn't have told you anything about it if it wasn't true."

"No, I don't suppose you would have," said the Head grimly. "Well, we'll just 'phone down to the police station, eh? And we'll suspend judgment on your little aberration till we've investigated this other matter, eh? In the meantime not a word about it to the other boys."

"Did it hurt?" said Smith Minor sympathetically. He was waiting outside the door, seeking solace for the loss of his cricket bat.

"My boy, whackings are off. No, I can't stop. I've got important business to attend to."

"Swank," said Smith Minor disgustedly, but at the same time he was very anxious and not a little disappointed. Rogers had a perfectly remarkable knack of getting out of tight corners.

The excitement was intense when, at the first hour, it was discovered that both the Head and Rogers were missing. Speculation was rife, but the wildest efforts of imagination never depicted Rogers, the Head, a sergeant, and a policeman setting off in the direction of the Manor by a long detour, warily descending the valley and concealing themselves among the trees in the avenue. That was what was actually happening at 9.15. Rogers was

tremulous with excitement, the sergeant frankly sceptical, the policeman stolid and imperturbable. The Head's state of mind might have been conjectured from a constant series of grunts, interspersed with an occasional "Very peculiar."

Waiting for the critical moment was tiring work. It was too wet to sit down and the best one could do was to lean against trees, the consequence of which was much as if one had leant against a gate freshly painted green. The discovery of this fact and the presence of innumerable insects put the head in a very bad humour indeed. Rogers looked at his watch. It was a quarter to ten.

"If this story turns out to be false, Rogers," said the Head, extracting an ant from inside his sock, "I can guarantee you the worst whacking you've ever had in your life."

"And he'll deserve it," said the sergeant.

"E will," said the constable.

Rogers began to wish he had left the old gentleman to his fate.

"We'll give 'em another twenty minutes," said the sergeant. "And then I'm off. I haven't got any time to waste on—"

He stopped suddenly. The sound of distant voices broke suddenly in upon their solitude. He listened with growing perplexity as the sound grew nearer. There seemed to be many voices, jovial voices, and blended with them sounds of feminine laughter. About it there was nothing of the conspiratorial silence one expected on such an occasion.

"Um," said the Head.

"Sounds like a picnic party," said the sergeant.

There was a groan as the lodge gates opened, a clash as they swung to again. Birds flapped up in hurried flight from the avenue. The voices drew nearer, loud and jovial voices. And then there came into sight the strangest collection of humanity the Head had seen for a long time. The fat man with the inevitable cigar and the thin man with the equally inevitable cigarette, both staggering under the weight of heavy bags, headed the procession. Behind them streamed a merry crowd similarly laden, men, women and boys.

"Those are them," said Rogers excitedly.

"The fat one and the thin one."

The sergeant stepped out of his lair.

"Good morning," he said politely.

"Good morning," said the fat man, bowing.

"There's been some slight misunderstanding," continued the sergeant. "This boy here has got hold of some story about you planning to murder an old gentleman. Said he overheard you last night."

The fat man dropped his bag and, holding his sides, laughed till he was purple in the face. The thin man shrieked delightedly.

"Well, I never!" gasped the fat man.

"Fancy—" He broke out into a fresh rumble of laughter. When he had finished and got out a handkerchief and wiped the tears from his eyes, he explained. "Permit me to introduce the two criminals and their victim," he said. "Dickson," he called. A young, clean-shaven gentleman extracted himself from the crowd.

"I am Morton Mowbray, Producer of the Peerless Film Co. This," indicating the thin gentleman, "is Mr. Rupert Renton, our star villain, and this," indicating the young gentleman, "is Mr. Philip Dickson, whose speciality is the portrayal of benevolent old gentlemen."

Laughter seized him again. "And Renton and I came here to settle a few details. That must have been what your smart young red-headed friend overheard. George! Talk about Sherlock Holmes!"

Rogers was far from feeling the slightest resemblance to the immortal detective.

"And now, that being all settled," said the fat man, "may I invite you all to witness the picturisation of the great, dramatic photo play in three reels entitled 'The Mystery of Chesterton Manor.' You are just in time to witness the treacherous murder of the benevolent old gentleman."

"Thanks very much," said the Head, "but I'm afraid we must be getting back. Come along, Rogers. I'm sorry, sergeant, to have brought you on a wild-goose chase, but you will have the consolation of knowing that the cause of it will pay a worthy penalty."

Smith Minor, listening outside the Head's study an hour later, felt that the loss of his cricket bat had been satisfactorily avenged.



# SCAN COURTESY OF EXCITER

